

ESTIMATES FOR MINT AND BRANCH MINT.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

*Estimates of appropriation for the support of the mint at Philadelphia, and
the branch mint at San Francisco.*

JANUARY 18, 1855.—Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, and ordered to be
printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
January 16, 1855.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit a copy of a letter received by this department from the Director of the Mint at Philadelphia, enclosing a copy of a letter received by him from the superintendent of the branch mint at San Francisco, asking for an appropriation of sixty-six thousand dollars to supply a deficiency of means for the support of the branch mint during the current fiscal year; and also asking for a special appropriation for the mint at Philadelphia, for an estimated deficiency of means for the current fiscal year. A copy of the statements on which such estimate is founded is also enclosed.

I remain, very respectfully,

JAMES GUTHRIE,
Secretary of the Treasury.

HON. LINN BOYD,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,
Philadelphia, January 13, 1855.

SIR: Herewith I enclose a copy of a letter received from the superintendent of the branch mint at San Francisco, asking for an appropriation of sixty-six thousand dollars, to supply a deficiency of means for their support during the current fiscal year. The grounds of the request are sufficiently set forth in the superintendent's letter, and I believe the appropriation indispensably necessary.

I also find it absolutely essential to ask for a special appropriation for this mint, to supply an estimated deficiency in our means for the current fiscal year. The grounds of the estimate are presented in the

statement which I enclose. In explanation of the particular causes which have originated this deficiency, it may be sufficient to state that, in consequence of the late fall in the rate of exchange, all the bullion now received from California is sent to the mint for refining and coinage, none of it being exported in the shape of bars. When I estimated for the appropriations requisite to our support in the current fiscal year, I anticipated not only that the New York assay office would have commenced operations in February last, but also that the larger part of the bullion received from California would be refined and cast into bars there for exportation. Neither of these anticipations has been realized. Not only was the opening of the office delayed till after October last, but (in consequence of the turn of exchange in our favor) the lack of demand for bars at that office throws the greater part of the bullion upon this mint. Under such circumstances I have found it impossible to reduce our expenses within the limit assigned by the appropriations which would otherwise have sufficed, and have to request \$40,000 in addition to supply deficiencies; but, inasmuch as \$30,000 of this sum is already reported, as I find from the printed bill of the Committee of Ways and Means, the sum I now ask to be added thereto is \$37,000.

I might, perhaps, with a prudent regard to the probabilities of the future, ask also an increase to our appropriation for the fiscal year 1855-'6; but as it is possible that the present course of commercial affairs is temporary, and it is my wish to conduct this establishment with the least possible expenditure, I abstain from such a request at present.

In my letter of the 26th October last, above referred to, I adverted to some of the difficulties of estimating for the mints and the assay office, and referred particularly to the impracticability of anticipating, with any certainty, how the total mass of bullion and coinage operations would divide itself, from year to year, among the several establishments, and consequently of determining in advance the probable expenses of each establishment. The aggregate expenses of all the establishments can, however, be estimated with tolerable approximation; any increase at one being measurably the cause, or due to, a decrease of another. In view of such considerations, I suggested that it would be a wise measure of legislation, if the appropriations for the mints, &c., had a special clause added to them authorizing you, when you deemed it expedient, to transfer the benefit of an appropriation from one establishment to another. Permit me again to recommend this measure. The precise form of legislation I suggested was the following, which would, I suppose, meet the object in view: "These several appropriations for the mints and the assay office may, at the option of the Secretary of the Treasury, be regarded as general appropriations for their support, and may be transferred, by his authority, from one institution to another, as the demands of the public service may require."

I take this occasion to refer to some discrepancies between the appropriations reported lately from the Committee of Ways and Means and those asked for, and indulge the hope that the bill will be corrected before its passage.

In the appropriation for salaries at this mint, no mention is made of

the "assistant melter and refiner" among the officers, although the sum appropriated actually covers the salary required for him. At the New York assay office the aggregate appropriation for salaries is \$14,400, while \$24,400 was asked for, and is necessary. The difference is, I suppose, due to an error of copying. For the San Francisco mint the appropriations for salaries is but \$28,000. The amount asked for was \$33,000. By the enclosed letter of the superintendent, it would seem that \$31,000 will have been expended during the current fiscal year for salaries, and the necessity for an additional clerk, which he adverts to, will demand the \$33,000 asked for.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your faithful servant,
JAMES ROSS SNOWDEN,
Director.
 Hon. JAS. GUTHRIE,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington.

UNITED STATES BRANCH MINT,
San Francisco, December 15, 1854.

SIR: Your favor of the 18th November has been duly received and contents noted.

You will herewith receive a statement drawn in accordance with your suggestion; I hope it will furnish you with the desired information relative to the probable deficiency in the appropriations of the current fiscal year, available for the expenses of this institution.

Our deductions from old deposits, as well as our ordinary and contingent expenses, are so very variable, that it is impossible to set them down with anything like accuracy. I can, therefore, make only an approximate estimate of these items. And the probability is, I fear, that the former, in consequence of a great falling off in deposits for coinage, arising from a want of acids, will, for a time at least, be much less than we had a right to expect when our first estimates were made up; while the latter, in view of our commencing the coinage of silver, will be considerably increased. I have accordingly made what I deem a proper allowance for these contingencies.

My estimate covers also the salary of an additional clerk, which the treasurer found it necessary to employ at the commencement of the current fiscal year, as well as that of one which I find that I shall be compelled to employ from the 1st proximo.

Hoping that the accompanying statement, in connexion with that which I have already forwarded, may furnish all the information which the department requires, I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEWIS AIKEN BIRDSALL, *Superintendent.*

Supplies from appropriations and mint profits, '53-4, about	\$13,000
Appropriations of fiscal year 1854-5.....	116,000
Probable amount of deductions, 1854-5.....	71,000
Total probable means.....	<u>200,000</u>

Amount of salaries to be paid.....	\$31,000
Wages of workmen.....	115,000
Incidental and contingent expenses.....	120,000
Total estimate of expenses.....	266,000
	200,000
Total estimated deficiency of the fiscal year.....	66,000

Grounds of an estimated appropriation required to supply a deficiency of means for the support of the mint of the United States during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1855.

The present balance in the ordinary fund of the mint (January 12, 1855) is.....	\$36,176
The appropriations undrawn and available, amount to....	38,525
The estimated deductions for the remainder of the year, available for expenses, after subtracting the amount necessary to defray the chief coiner's and melter and refiner's wastage for 1854, and a balance to debit of profit and loss, may be set down at.....	11,000
Total estimated means.....	85,701
The estimated amount payable for wages is.....	\$42,000
That for salaries.....	13,950
That for incidental expenses.....	69,751
	125,701
Difference between estimated means and expenses, or probable deficiency.....	\$40,000
Of this deficiency, \$3,000 will be due for salaries, increased under the last general appropriation bill. For this amount the Committee of Ways and Means have already reported an appropriation, so that the amount to be further appropriated will be less than \$40,000 by that sum, or say...	\$37,000
Appropriations required to meet a deficiency at the mint of the United States, during the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1855:	
For a deficiency in the appropriation for wages.....	\$12,000
For a deficiency in the appropriation for incidental and contingent expenses and wastage.....	25,000
Total appropriation required.....	37,000